



THE FAMILY

Evangelical Presbyterian Church

JANUARY 2011



4 Deana Patheal	18 Jonel Hickey
8 Ben Wall	21 Becky Flowers
12 Ryan Hall	27 Kelly Mills
14 Naomi Bach	30 Sharon Hall
17 Jamie Vanbiber	

Kitchen Clean-up for January
MARY JONES AND JO ANNE KLOTZ

Fellowship Lunch Hosts and Hostesses January 9, 2011

**Angie Anders	Jeremy Anders
*Christi Alderman	James Alderman
Mark Patheal	Chrys Patheal
*Jeanne Damoff	

* Please bring one bag of ice. ** Please bring sliced lemons for tea. Each hostess

should bring a portion of bread to share. If we have a special function in place of fellowship lunch, the team will be asked to serve in some capacity. Thank you for your help. God Bless. Please call me if you cannot be there. Kim

Financial Update

		YTD
November, 2010		
Giving Income	21,795	265,315
Expenses	24,535	265,763
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NET	(2,739)	(449)





From the Music Director

Christmas, my favorite time of year, has come and gone. I enjoy getting out the decorations, but why is it such a chore to put them away? I always dread the day, or days, I set aside to take down the tree, the lights, etc. and erase all hints of the Christmas Season. And yet, when all is put away, I have a feeling of accomplishment and of excitement as the New Year arrives.

First, however, I must thank everyone who had a part in the presentation of "The Promised Hope" on December 12: the adults, the children, the band, the decorators, those who prepared and set up the food, and all of you who came. GREAT JOB, EVERYONE! Truly Jesus was glorified, honored, and exalted that evening.

The choirs will resume rehearsals on Wednesday, January 5: Joyful Sounds and More at 3:30 – 4:45, and Voices of Worship at 6:00 p.m. All choirs are open for membership. Come, join, and be a part of this ministry, if God is leading you here.

The children of Joyful Sounds and More have already begun on the musical, "I'm Gonna Sing" that will be presented in April. Voices of Worship will continue ministering in song on Sunday mornings in the Worship Service.

May you have a blessed New Year as we all work together to serve Him.

"Great God, we sing that mighty hand by which supported still we stand;

The opening year Thy mercies shows, that mercy crowns it till it close.

By day, by night, at home, abroad, still are we guarded by our God,

By His incessant bounty fed, by His unerring counsel led.

With grateful hearts the past we own; the future, all to us unknown,

We to Thy guardian care commit, and, peaceful, leave before Thy feet.

In scenes exalted or depressed, Thou art our joy, and Thou our rest;

Thy goodness all our hopes shall raise, adored through all our changing days."

In His Service,
Sarah Joe



Young at Heart will meet Tuesday, January 25, 10:30 a.m., in the Choir Room. Lunch plans will be announced soon.



Children's Ministry

Happy New Year EPC! Sometimes I think the hardest part of this job is trying to think of things to say in the monthly newsletter. Surely that isn't right! I certainly never have trouble talking at any other time. Just ask Jeremy. I wanted to write something really profound about beginning a new year, but my brain refuses to cooperate so I will leave those deeper musings to Ben or Pastor Craig, and just tell you what we've been up to in the children's ministry lately.

In anticipation and celebration of our soon-to-arrive new babies, I've painted the nursery

green. It's pretty nice looking if I do say so. Be sure and drop in to check it out. Delphene has been away visiting family since mid-November but is due back on January 9th. She says "hello" and that she misses us all, and I know that we are missing her as well! I want to thank Jamie Vanbiber, Nina Bates and Doug Peteet for filling in for her on select Sundays for nursery duty. You've been a real blessing!

January 14th-16th Ben, Jeremy and I will be taking the 6-8th grade students to the Winter Thang in Tyler, TX for a three day retreat. We are looking forward to spending some time with these kids, and praying that we all return with a deeper knowledge of Christ and a desire to worship Him more fully. Thanks Ben, for arranging this trip for our tweens and junior highers!

Speaking of "tweens", Jeremy has been meeting with our 10-12 year olds twice a month for some quality mentoring and discipleship time during WWF (Word, Worship, Family). They discuss important stuff that tweens need to know about relating to one another, relating to their parents, and relating to Jesus. Food and games are also known to be present. If you know of a tween-aged kid who would like to join the group, please contact Jeremy Anders. Friends, neighbors and total strangers are welcome.

My hope is that your new year is blessed with joy in the Lord, and peace in the knowledge that our hope is in Jesus Christ who redeems us!

Angie



From The Youth Ministry

Church family,
Don't Waste Your Sports is a new Wednesday night Bible study for youth and their parents. It begins at 6pm and ends at 7pm and will include

a sports quiz (with prizes), DVD teaching from C.J. Mahaney, and follow up study on how to make not only our sports but also our lives count for the cause of Christ. So don't think of "sport" as simply things like baseball, track, or football. Think of it as anything we do that's *fun* that we do. So, youth and parents, if you enjoy fun things, then you should come out and learn how to glorify God in doing it.

Our young adult group will be starting *God Wins!* which is a study on the book of Revelation. But it's not your typical study at all. Instead of trying to figure out when Jesus might come back and what the "signs" of his coming are, we will be looking at what the book meant to the readers of the first-century and how we can learn to be filled with hope in the midst of persecution. This approach makes the book of Revelation less mysterious and allows us to see that the message of the book truly is that God wins!

We have a Junior High (6th – 8th) retreat coming up from the 14th to 16th of January in Tyler, TX. We have seven students signed up to go and three adult volunteers (Jeremy and Angie Anders as well as myself). This should prove to be a good time of relational ministry and bonding. Please pray!

Christ's and yours,
Ben



Session Mandates a Name Change

After informal conversations with various EPC of Marshall members as well as others who have insight, the Session has discerned a readiness to change the name of our church to a more simple and memorable name. Therefore, at the December meeting, the Session unanimously mandated an expedited process of changing our name! "Evangelical Presbyterian Church of Marshall" is a wonderful name, and those of us who know it well are quite comfortable with it. However, for visitors who are new to us as well as potential visitors,

that's just too much of a mouthful! Even shortening it to "EPC of Marshall" or simply "EPC" doesn't really help, because then it loses recognizable information: to the uninformed it sounds like a business rather than a church. So, we are after a new name which defines who we are and yet is simple to remember... even one that has a ring to it, if possible.

A few suggestions have been put forth, but these are by no means the only names we'll consider:

- Christ Community Church
- Christ Fellowship
- Cornerstone Community Church
- Covenant Presbyterian Church
- Grace Community Church
- Fields of Grace Church

Notice that only one suggestion has the word "Presbyterian" in it. If we choose a primary name without the word "Presbyterian," we would make that clear, perhaps in a secondary line, something like "A Congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church."

For at least two reasons we're entertaining the possibility of leaving "Presbyterian" out of the primary name:

(1) The word carries baggage in many people's minds. For example, they immediately associate it with "liberal" theology, simply because the largest Presbyterian denomination is fraught with theological liberalism and skepticism about the authority of the Bible. When they see "Presbyterian" in our name, many people assume we also are theologically liberal and skeptical of the Bible. We can't clear up their misperception if they decide to avoid us even before they have met us!

(2) As I mentioned earlier, for many the word "Presbyterian" is just too much of a mouthful and really has no clear meaning. It doesn't really help, and it sometimes hurts. It only helps other Presbyterians or people who know about the distinguishing marks of different denominations (and those people are usually

quite settled in other churches). But even those "in the know" will see it in the secondary name, so we won't lose them if they are interested.

So, here we go! Before long, we'll be identified by another name. Yes, we're aware that this will be a rigorous administrative load for awhile. Everything will need to reflect the name change. Let's just cross that bridge when we come to it, okay? For now, we need to decide on the name. We plan to include the current members in the name-change process. If you have a suggestion, let Pastor Craig know about it!



I know the Advent season is over, but I can't help but reflect "aloud" with you on an intriguing thought (at least to me) that I encountered in my meditations on the Advent birth narratives. I was struck by the calm resolve of Mary in response to the news that she was chosen to give birth to Christ Jesus while still a virgin. She neither swelled up with bold pride (like Peter, when he told Jesus he would never deny Him – then later denied Him three times; **Matthew 26:35** *Peter said to him, "Even if I must die with you, I will not deny you!" And all the disciples said the same*); nor did Mary shy away from the weighty responsibility with reasons why that seemed to her a bad idea (as Moses had done when he was charged with delivering Israel from Egypt). Mary simply said, *"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to Your word."*

I'd like to think I'm as consistently and tranquilly surrendered to the will of God as was Mary, but often it turns out I'm more like Peter and the rest of Jesus' disciples. When certain kinds of stressors or trials enter my life, I might not complain openly, but below the surface – yikes!

– I can become grouchy and harbor a complaining spirit. I wish it weren't so, but I'm just being honest. After all, we're family, right?

God knows us better than we know ourselves, so I wonder if He often sees weak-faith attitudes below the surface, even when we present strong faith outwardly. We might show a positive, smiling countenance on the surface when underneath is a festering pessimism. Oh to be consistently like Mary through and through, no matter what difficulties we face as we walk with the Lord! Why can't we always maintain a calm resolve, a settled trust, that God is fundamentally loving and kind to His covenant people? Mary wasn't naïve; she certainly knew that her charge would come with hardship (including the shunning looks from her neighbors and the skepticism of friends), but she took it on quietly and courageously.

What are you facing in the year ahead? Some among us know that at least for awhile, things are going to be really difficult. Others will probably experience a windfall of abundant blessing. Most of us will fall somewhere along that continuum. Whatever we encounter, my prayer is that we will trust in the Lord

completely and enter His grace-saturated 2011 with the kind of calm resolve that can genuinely say, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to Your word."

Grace and peace,

Pastor Craig

If you read this article, let me know. I'm curious to see how many people are reading the newsletter:

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